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PEOPLE WITHOUT HOMES:

A PERMANENT EMERGENCY

January 1983

A participant in
the United Way

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Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto

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INTRODUCTION

"People Without Homes: A Permanent Emergency" is intended to add significantly to public discussion on the issues of crisis housing for low income people in Metro Toronto.

As pointed out in this discussion paper, the issue of homelessness has reached a level of urgency not witnessed since the Great Depression. And for many low income people in Toronto who are experiencing a crisis in affordable housing, "the shelter crisis cannot simply be called an 'emergency'. It is a long-term state, a permanent emergency."

The paper is a product of the efforts of the SPC's After Hours Committee which decided several months ago to focus on the issue of emergency housing for low income people in Metro, a priority to meeting one of most basic living needs of people - shelter.

We wanted to point out that there is no simple solution to the crisis in affordable housing, that solution requires action from governments and the voluntary sector.

The After Hours Committee included the following members:

- Gisele Blanchette, Downtown Churchworkers Assn.
- Ellen Campbell, Executive Director, YWCA
- Derek Stodart, Businessman, All Saints Church
- Gordon Winch, Executive Director, Distress Centre #1
- Beverley Wybrow, Community Information Centre of Metro Toronto

Staff assistance to the project was provided by:

- Madeline Allicock, Secretary
- Robert Doyle, Senior Program Director
- Christa Freiler, Program Director

I want to thank both the Committee members and staff for their valuable contribution to this common effort.

Robert Katz, Chairman
After Hours Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issue of homelessness has reached a level of urgency not experienced since the Great Depression. The renewed need for emergency housing is due to:

- o an increase in the number of people requiring emergency accommodation;
- o an increase in the length of time people remain in emergency hostels;
- o a shift in the population of hostel users (increased use by young people under 25, employable men, families, single elderly women, women with children, and ex-psychiatric patients).

People with low incomes in Toronto are undergoing a crisis in affordable housing. For them the shelter crisis cannot simply be called an 'emergency'. It is a long-term state, a permanent emergency.

The permanent emergency in long-term affordable housing can be attributed to a number of factors:

- high interest rates
- low rental vacancies and construction
- insufficient public housing construction
- inadequate social assistance and shelter subsidy rates
- 'deconversion'
- the disappearance of inexpensive hotels, rooming houses and boarding homes

No single approach to solving the long-term housing problem will be sufficient. No single type of permanent accommodation will meet all needs.

A coordinated set of strategies offering a range of long-term housing options must include:

- rooming houses and flop houses
- subsidized accommodation for single people and families

- cooperative housing
- support services within a residential setting for people who require more than a place to live

The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto suggests a number of issues which need to be considered for their impact on housing affordability:

- an examination of municipal by-laws, and health and safety standards;
- review of property assessment for the purpose of municipal taxation;
- examination of provincial legislation and CMHC policy re provision of low-income units;
- consideration of rental subsidies for low-income people in rooming houses and non profit accommodation.

The provision of adequate shelter is a problem which defies easy solution. The infusion of short-term money will do little to ease the long-term problem providing affordable housing for low income people. In the effort to find solutions, the SPC has isolated three of the more important issues needing to be clarified, debated and resolved:

i) the role of emergency hostels
ii) access to emergency hostels and the quality of information
iii) the role of the voluntary sector

The role of hostels should be re-defined to clarify the limits of their responsibility in meeting long-term housing needs, their potential role in the provision of support services and their capacity to meet short-term needs. Future hostel policies must contain a clear definition of hostel users and their needs. Reflecting the diversity of these needs there should exist a variety of publicly-funded hostels in Metro.

Attention must be given to increasing access to information on hostels by potential users, and to developing up-to-the minute inventory of available beds for emergency accommodation. Improved tracking systems are required, but focus must also shift to improving access for

excluded groups, such as ex-psychiatric patients, to the shelter which hostels provide.

The initiatives of voluntary sector organizations, including churches, in meeting the needs of the homeless signal a generosity of spirit and willingness to contribute space, financing and human energy. These efforts should continue. However, private and voluntary initiatives cannot and should not be expected to meet public need. The commitment of long-term funds for emergency services should not take the place of a publicly-mandated and planned program for meeting both short and long-term housing needs. It is government, which has a basic, inescapable responsibility to make sure that all people have adequate shelter to meet their individual and family needs. The SPC calls for the commitment of all levels of government in providing long-term and short-term affordable housing for low-income people in Metro Toronto.

PEOPLE WITHOUT HOMES: A PERMANENT EMERGENCY

PREFACE

People who have no place to live will represent one of the most important social issues of 1983. Newspapers will show pictures of men being turned out of shelters into the cold; women's groups will discuss the plight of abused mothers who cannot leave their homes for want of an alternative; bureaucrats will wonder how to house so many families in so few locations; and TTC drivers will comment on the increased numbers of people who spend the night riding the streetcar to keep warm. The year 1983 will be exceptionally difficult for the providers of emergency housing because a severe downturn in the economy has coincided with a significant reduction in the number of housing units available in Toronto. Unless quick and appropriate action is undertaken a large number of Torontonians will spend many winter nights in the cold.

In the next several months, papers will be written examining the extent to which short-term crisis housing is in demand. Other studies will focus on the need for adequate low income housing and on factors responsible for the loss of affordable accommodation. The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto is aware of the following publications which are soon expected:

- The Metro Toronto Community Services Department, as part of a larger assisted housing study, has collected information on the need for emergency hostels in Metro Toronto. The findings are to be presented to the Community Services and Housing Committee in January and later incorporated into the Planning Departments larger study to be released shortly thereafter.

- The Ministry of Community and Social Services is currently conducting a policy review of emergency hostels and halfway houses which will be completed by 1984.

- A study is being jointly undertaken by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. Planned for completion

in January 1983, the report will contain a section dealing specifically with the social effects of "deconversion" (a process by which non-apartment rental units are being lost).

- o The Single Displaced Persons Project, a group comprised of individuals from community and church-based organizations, is preparing a report which will focus on the long-term changes required to assist homeless people, such as mutual support, coordination, and the promotion of supportive housing and employment options.

- o A committee of youth-serving agencies in Metro Toronto has written a report on the need for different types of hostel accommodation for young people. Scheduled for release in January, the report also recognizes the impact of the housing affordability problem on the need for emergency shelters for youth.

We welcome any work which may contribute to a solution to these serious problems. At the same time we are concerned that all of the information which is coming to light not be ignored or treated as an isolated human interest item. Because we wish to see the issues of crisis housing resolved we offer this statement which reiterates Social Planning Council policy on housing and social assistance, and attempts to frame the questions which must be asked if an appropriate emergency housing policy is to be developed. We want to ensure that policy makers address the real issues rather than the symptoms of these problems.

THE CRISIS IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The issue of permanent, affordable accommodation is central to any discussion of emergency hostels. We do not know exactly how many people are staying in emergency hostels because they cannot find a permanent,

place to live. Some hostel operators have estimated that half of the people using emergency hostels do so inappropriately. It is not unusual to hear of people staying in hostels for five years or more. The emergency shelter crisis is really a crisis in affordable accommodation for people on low incomes. The permanent emergency in long term affordable housing has been attributed to a number of factors. Among these are:

- o Affordability gaps for low and moderate income families have been increasing. In the case of home ownership, the major contributing factor is high interest rates (particularly in combination with high unemployment or employment uncertainties).

- o Rental vacancies are at an all-time low and little additional rental construction is occurring.

- o Not enough public housing is being built to accommodate demand. Since 1975 the only units Ontario has built are a few buildings for the elderly. Neither of the two senior levels of government are actively involved in creating subsidized housing.

- o Provincial social assistance and shelter subsidy rates are inadequate. A single person on General Welfare Assistance has a disposable income of only $76 a month after meeting shelter costs according to CMHC surveys.

- o Inexpensive rental units have been lost as a result of "deconversion" (e.g. the conversion of multiple-unit houses into single family dwellings). In the city of Toronto, 13,000 units were lost from 1972 to 1979.

- o Inexpensive hotels, rooming houses, and boarding homes have been rapidly disappearing. Traditionally, these types of residences have provided temporary or long term accommodation for people on very low incomes. Their disappearance has resulted in increased demand for other forms of available accommodation.

- o Public housing regulations do not permit easy access to public housing for single able-bodied men under sixty years old.

- o There are serious problems being experienced in locating group homes, halfway houses and other adult residential facilities in Toronto. People who could be accommodated in such housing are often forced to rely instead on emergency shelter services.

NO SINGLE APPROACH

No single approach to solving the long-term housing problem will be sufficient; no single type of permanent accommodation will meet all needs. What is called for is a coordinated set of strategies offering a range of long-term housing options, including rooming houses and 'flop houses', subsidized accommodation for both single people and families, and cooperative housing. For people who require more than just a place to live, public funding should be available to provide support services within a residential setting. The choices which will need to be examined must include: increasing supply by government direct building or subsidies to private developers; and direct assistance to people e.g. shelter allowance, rent supplementation and tax meaxures.

In addition, there are a number of issues which warrant further investigation to determine their potential impact on housing affordability, namely:

- o There should be an examination of municipal by-laws and health and safety standards, particularly in the suburbs, to determine which ones unnecessarily restrict the development of small dwelling units.

- o Property assessment for the purpose of municipal taxation should be reviewed. Market value assessment may serve the possibility of having a moratorium on taxing the increased value of a renovation,if it increases the housing stock,should be explored.

- o There should be a complete examination of all provincial legislation pertaining to housing to determine the effect on the number of available low income units;

- o There should be an examination of CMHC policy related to low income units;

- o The Provincial Government should consider providing rental subsidies for low income single people in rooming houses and in non-profit accommodation.

Consideration should be given to removing the residency requirement for social assistance eligibility which presently serves as an obstacle to finding permanent accommodation. Under a regulation to the General Welfare Assistance act, people with no fixed address are ineligible for social assistance. It has been estimated that only about one in ten hostel users is presently receiving some form of social assistance, not including the services offered by the hostels themselves. In the absence of other forms of income, hostel users are locked into the hostel system because they are not able to pay the first and last month's or week's rent usually required by landlords. This regulation discriminates against homeless people.

THE CHANGING DEMAND FOR EMERGENCY HOSTELS

In the last two years, the issue of homelessness has received increasing public attention and assumed a level of urgency not experienced since the Great Depression. There are three immediate reasons for the renewed need for emergency housing:

i) an increase in the number of people requiring some form of emergency accommodation;
ii) an increase in the length of time people are remaining in emergency hostels; and
iii) a shift in the population of hostel users as a result of increased use by:

- o young people, both male and female, under the age of 25;
- o employable men, willing to work;
- o families who cannot find or afford permanent accommodation
- o single elderly women;
- o women with children; and
- o ex-psychiatric patients.

The exact numbers involved are difficult to document accurately since each hostel keeps different records and hostel users may be forced to move from shelter to shelter because of restrictions on length of stay. Hostel operators and other social agencies have nevertheless observed trends which cannot be ignored in examining the issues pertaining to emergency housing. Among the changes reported in newspapers and in conversations with service providers:

- o At the Fred Victor Mission 46 per cent of the residents are now under 30 years of age compared with only 20 per cent in 1978;
- o The Community Information Centre has noticed an increase in the number of calls from homeless families seeking emergency accommodation;
- o Covenant House, a 35-bed shelter for homeless young people, has 90 teenagers appearing on its doorstep each night, a 20 per cent increase in the last six months;
- o The Harbour Light Mission of the Salvation Army reports that it receives up to 20 young women a day seeking shelter, compared with 3 or 4 a day last year (Women's hostels have also seen an increase in the number of single women under the age of 25);
- o Because of a lack of housing alternatives and the loss of over 200 boarding home beds in Parkdale in the last year, hostels are experiencing an increase in the number of ex-psychiatric patients. (It is conservatively estimated that ex-patients comprise between 10 and 20 per cent of the current hostel population);
- o People from a diversity of backgrounds are now coming to social

agencies for help, particularly in the suburbs, including individuals and families who have never before had to rely on emergency services;

- o Children's Aid Societies in Ontario are accepting more children into their care because of economic conditions affecting home life (an 8 per cent increase since March 1982);
- o There appear to be more people begging on the streets.

These trends are the result of disturbing social and economic factors in Ontario which must be addressed in connection with the development of Metro and Provincial policies on emergency services. These factors, among others, are:

- o record high levels of unemployment, particularly among young people;
- o the decrease in affordable accommodation for low and moderate-income people;
- o increasingly inadequate levels of social assistance in relation to the cost of living (see the Social Planning Council's publications, "The Poor Get Poorer" and "The Continued Underfunding of Social Assistance in Ontario: An Analysis of 1983 Rates in Ontario");
- o deinstitutionalization, accompanied by a lack of support services and a limited range of housing options for people who require assistance to live in their communities (e.g. ex-psychiatric patients); and
- o an increase in the incidence of domestic disputes and family violence as a result of economic conditions.

REDEFINING NEED

Under the General Welfare Assistance Act, hostels are funded to provide a bed and three meals as a form of in-kind social assistance payment. This approach does not recognize the range of short-term needs, much less the

diversity of long-term needs of hostel users. Metro's Community Services Department, in its 1981 "Hostel Policy and Program Review", acknowledged that increasingly "...hostel residents require a variety of services which bear little resemblance to room and board", such as counselling and medical care. Metro's report also recognized that funding arrangements and hostel policies have not kept pace with the changing population of hostel users. It stated:

> "As the first to receive the casualties of changing social, economic and political conditions over which they have no control, hostel staff have identified needs which they cannot fill and for which they are not technically responsible."

We contend that the role of hostels should be re-defined to clarify the limits of their responsibility in meeting long-term housing needs and their potential role in the provision of support services. As a first step, future hostel policies must contain a clear definition of hostel users and their needs. Questions such as the following need to be addressed:

- Who are the people who use hostels?
- What are their needs?
- Do they use hostels during times of crisis or on an ongoing basis?
- Which needs can be appropriately and adequately met by hostels?
- Which needs should be met elsewhere?
- Who should meet these needs?

A discussion of hostel users and their possible needs should focus on the following:*

1) Older "unemployable" men who have been on the streets for many years (i.e. the "single displaced person").

   o Their needs include: Short-term room and board, in addition to a safe and clean permanent place to live, medical care and assistance in personal care, and access to adequate social assistance (which assumes eligibility for General Welfare Assistance).

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* Several of these groups were identified by Metro's "Hostel Policy and Program Review".

2) Unemployed, willing-to-work men and women.

- o Their needs include short-term room and board, and possibly crisis support services such as employment and general counselling. They may also require assistance in finding a job or applying for social assistance. Long-term needs are for a permanent place to live and, in some cases, skills training.

3) Homeless adolescents.

- o Their needs include short-term room and board, and crisis support services such as counselling. Long-term needs are for assistance in finding permanent accommodation, help in returning to school or re-establishing contact with parents, and assistance in job search and skills training. Many also require access to adequate social assistance which, of course, assumes eligibility for General Welfare Assistance.

4) Women with children.

- o Their needs include short-term room and board, day care, and assistance in finding permanent accommodation. Ongoing assistance in finding a job or applying for social assistance may also be required. In addition, some women may need legal advice, counselling, and job training.

5) Ex-psychiatric patients.

- o Their needs include both short-term and long-term accommodation, crisis support services, and ongoing support in the community. Adequate social assistance and job training services are also required. Some ex-psychiatric pateints may also need assistance in personal care and social activities.

6) Families.

- o Their needs include short-term accommodation together (not in separate facilities), assistance in finding affordable housing, relocation, day care and an adequate income.

7) Elderly men and women.

- o Their needs include an ongoing, affordable place to live and adequate medical care. Some also require assistance in personal care and daily living, ongoing social supports and adequate social assistance.

- Based on the above needs, there are essentially three categories of people presently using hostels:

1. those who can usually cope on their own but cannot find or afford a permanent place to live (e.g. unemployed men and women, families);
2. those who require temporary shelter and crisis support, in addition to ongoing support in the community (e.g. homeless adolescents, ex-psychiatric patients, some elderly people and some women with children); and
3. the single displaced person or the "skid row" inhabitant who would not make use of the support offered by social agencies and for whom a hostel has become a permanent place to live.

POLICY ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION

The provision of adequate shelter is a problem which defies easy resolution. We know that it will not be solved simply and that the provision of short-term money will do little to ease the long-term problems. In 1982, the Ministry of Community and Social Services committed an additional $1.5 million for emergency services such as drop-ins and direct assistance in Ontario, at least half of which is expected to be spent in Metro Toronto for programs operating from November to April 1983. We must ask, however, what will happen after April? Will there be another commitment of short-term funds for the winter of 1984? While we appreciate this initiative in meeting the immediate needs, we are concerned about people's ongoing need for affordable accommodation, an adequate living income, and a range of support services.

We are witnessing a surge in our community, as in many others, of voluntary efforts by citizens to help homeless people cope with their daily living needs. The contribution of voluntary efforts to alleviate the plight of the homeless, while timely and necessary, will never be sufficient in itself.

We are not, however, witnessing a commensurate commitment by governments to assist disadvantaged people to deal with emergency shelter needs. The governments response to increased needs is weak and inconsistent. We do not see evidence of the political will required to solve the long-term problems which have created permanent emergencies for many people.

We note a shift in the demand for emergency housing, parallelled with a change in the needs of hostel users. We have not seen a concurrent definition of the role which hostels should play in meeting emergency accommodation needs. Furthermore, problems in record-keeping, make it difficult to have an exact up-to-date picture of what hostel space is available and who uses the facilities.

We have isolated three of the more important issues regarding emergency shelter which we believe need to be clarified, debated and resolved. They are:

1) The role of emergency hostels.
2) Access to emergency hostels and the quality of information.
3) The role of the voluntary sector.

1. The Role of Emergency Hostels

Funding responsibility for the provision of emergency hostels presently rests with the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, through the Community Services Department, and the Provincial government, through the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Payments are cost-shared under the

General Welfare Assistance Act on an 80/20 (provincial/municipal) basis. Even though the Provincial government assumes a greater part of the financial burden, major administrative responsibility for emergency hostels lies with Metro. Hostel operators have identified as a problem the fact that there is no clear definition of the respective roles of the two levels of government, apart from their funding responsibilities. Specifically, there exists no clear definition of who is responsible for needs assessment and the initiation and monitoring of hostels. Because it is not always clear who makes policy decisions, it has in the past been difficult for hostel operators to lobby for increased funding to provide support services in addition to room and board.

There are basically two types of hostels in Metro Toronto funded under the General Welfare Assistance Act: large dormitory-style, custodial care facilities which offer a bed and one or more meals; and smaller, home-like buildings which provide a number of support services in addition to room and board. The first type, for men, is presently funded at a rate of $7.50 per day and the services remain essentially unchanged from fifty years ago when most men's hostels were established for victims of the Depression. Most of the women's hostels, on the other hand, presently receive $23.00 a day and serve a 24-hour crisis support function, rather than merely custodial care. They offer services such as counselling, life skills training, job search programs and, in some cases, in-house child care and follow-up support.

The reason for the existence of different models appears to be historically based on our notions of who is 'deserving' and who is 'undeserving' of care. Women who are abused by their husbands are considered not to be responsible for their situation; homeless men are more easily assumed to have chosen a life of homelessness, alcoholism, and indigence. Consequently, largely through the efforts of the women's movement in the 1960's and 70's, women's hostels were established for women and their children, who were victims of domestic violence. Because men's hostels have always served both employable and 'unemployable' men, the model which emerged reflected the attitude that most users were essentially

lazy and irresponsible. As a result, even today, the men's hostels require men to vacate the hostel every morning, presumably to look for jobs or permanent accommodation.

One problem with this custodial model of emergency shelters for men is that it is geared toward the lowest common denominator. It does not recognize the range of needs and situations experienced by the men who require more than a place to sleep. At Seaton House the 700-bed hostel run by Metro, the ages of the men range from 16 to 80. With the increase in hostel users who are unemployed, willing-to-work younger men, the assumption that most of the men have 'chosen' the street as a way of life must be questioned.

Reflecting the diversity of needs of present hostel users, there should exist a variety of publicly-funded hostels in Metro. There should be more emergency shelters specifically for adolescents, both male and female, who may require crisis support in addition to room and board. Similarly, there should be a number of smaller shelters for men who are temporarily unemployed and may require assistance in finding a job or long-term accommodation. Small 24-hour crisis support hostels should be available to men just as they are to women.

There remains a group of men, the 'street-wise' skid row veterans, who are by some considered to be 'beyond help' or needing no help apart from a place to sleep and a meal. There may be some people for whom the offer of counselling and other support services would be an unwanted intrusion. Perhaps the notion of 'crisis support' does not make sense for some men whose lives consist of a series of crises. However, these men should be provided with a clean, safe, permanent place to live, where they will not be turned out in the morning, as well as adequate medical care and a degree of privacy not available in a large hostel with hundreds of other men. It is ironic that the present system of men's hostels is based on the presumed need of this residual population for emergency room and board. While most of the 'skid row' men really need permanent places to live, the other hostel users require short-term crisis support, in addition to permanent accommodation and jobs. Either way, men's hostels are not

meeting the primary needs of present hostel users.

The problem with women's hostels for both single women and women with children appears to be primarily one of volume. The precise need is difficult to determine since it appears that many women are forced to remain in bad home situations due to the lack of both emergency shelters and permanent affordable accommodation. With the increased use by young single women, many of whom are ex-psychiatric patients, more support hostels will have to be made available.

Hostel operators and social agencies have also identified the need for more hostels for families. Presently, most hostels will accept only women and children or men, but not whole families.

2. Access to Emergency Hostels and the Quality of Information

The issue of access to emergency hostels requires attention because hostels are frequently not staffed to deal with people who exhibit "problem" behaviours.

Some people, particularly ex-psychiatric patients, may be denied access to emergency shelters. Some of the smaller hostels have indicated that they do not normally admit people whose main problem is psychiatric in nature. As pointed out in a joint study for the City of Toronto's Department of Public Health and the Supportive Housing Coalition, this means that a sub-group of the psychiatric population often does not have access to even the minimal shelter offered by hostels.

Another aspect of access is information on the location, type and availability of vacant beds in emergency shelters. For some people, such as victims of domestic violence, a lack of knowledge of the existence or location of emergency hostels means that they must stay in bad home situations because they are unaware of the alternatives. Difficulty in gaining access to information about where to find appropriate emergency beds is also a problem for those who work with people at night, such as police officers.

The location of men's hostels also poses access problems. All men's hostels are presently concentrated in the City of Toronto, primarily in the downtown core. While this may be convenient for those men who must rely on other emergency services, such as downtown soup kitchens, it restricts access for others who may be looking for jobs or permanent accommodation in the suburbs. While an attempt has been made to distribute women's hostels throughout Metro Toronto, no similar efforts have been made for men.

Because of the mobility of the population of hostel users and the need for immediate crisis responses, no adequate count has been taken of the people affected. The usual ways of keeping track of people do not exist (e.g. a central intake or referral source). Any description of hostel users and their needs tends to be impressionistic, with actual demand for emergency hostels not precise. It is vital that Metro Community Services Department undertake to develop an intake and referral method which would also serve a data collection function. People requiring emergency shelter as well as referral agents must be able to rely on a system which has an up-to-the-minute inventory of available beds for emergency accommodation. And we need a system which can provide valid and reliable data on hostel use for more accurate planning and development of emergency shelter provision.

Most people presently using hostels require more than an immediate short-term response to problems. The role of hostels should be expanded to allow them to meet at least the short-term needs of those requiring their services. Emergency hostels should not continue to act as a dead-end form of welfare.

3. The Role of the Voluntary Sector

The voluntary sector has traditionally provided space, financing and human energy in its efforts to alleviate the problems of people in need of homes. This has been a valuable contribution and should continue. However, private and voluntary initiatives cannot and should not be

expected to meet public needs. The commitment of short-term funds for emergency services should not take the place of a publicly-mandated and planned program for meeting both short and long-term housing needs. Homeless people should not have to rely on the charitable impulses of voluntary organizations, such as churches, for services, nor on emergency hostels as substitutes for adequate social assistance and affordable accommodation.

We commend the voluntary sector for its involvement in the provision of emergency housing and associated services to the growing number of homeless people in Metro who require emergency shelter and whose needs to survive and maintain a standard of health and well-being must somehow be met. At the same time we urge that voluntary contributions be directed to areas where they can be most effective and efficient, and do not duplicate or take over the legitimate functions of public authorities. Voluntary organizations could play a valuable role in building or strengthening informal support networks as alternatives to emergency hostels for runaway youths or other homeless people. They could also become more involved in advocating for social housing (such as group homes) and zoning changes by actively working to promote greater community acceptance of people in various forms of accommodation. Instead, voluntary groups, particularly the churches, are increasingly recruited into the business of providing short-term emergency services or 'crash' programs.

There is a danger that both governments and voluntary groups will lose sight of the need for mandated programs to ensure affordable accommodation and adequate incomes for all people.

It is the government, particularly the Provincial government, which has a basic, inescapable responsibility to make sure that all people have adequate shelter to meet their individual and family needs. The responsibility must be exercised continuously - not with stops and starts which reveal an attitude that providing decent and adequate shelter to people requires only temporary and intermittent attention.

CONCLUSION

To solve the emergency shelter crisis there must be action from all sectors. The province will have to develop a variety of publicly-assisted housing alternatives and to ensure the adequacy of social assistance payments and shelter subsidy allowances. The municipal governments should examine municipal by-laws, particularly in the suburbs, to see how they can be relaxed to allow for the development of smaller units and lower priced housing throughout Metro Toronto. As well, municipalities must make a stronger commitment to actually provide more low income housing. The Federal government through CMHC must take steps to ensure that the stock of affordable housing for low-income people is increased. The voluntary sector must continue to provide shelter, but must as well assume an increased advocacy role.

All sectors must acknowledge that the crisis in emergency housing is not simply a result of a shortage of beds in hostels. A firm commitment must be undertaken to ensure that the real crisis, a crisis in affordable housing, is addressed and that affordable housing is perceived as a right of all.